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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

AMERICAN PEACE SOCIETY,

IN

PARK STREET CHURCH, BOSTON.

MAY 28, 1860.

BY SAMUEL J. MAY,

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK.

BOSTON:
AMERICAN PEACE SOCIETY,
CONGREGATIONAL BUILDING, CHAUNCY STREET,
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Apr. 24. 1873

ADDRESS.

"Towns deserted, burning village,
Murder, rape, destruction, pillage;
Man compelled man's blood to shed,
Weeping, wailing, want of bread;
Commerce checked; grave citizens
Armed with swords instead of pens;
Harvests trampled, homesteads burned,
This is war! why isn't it spurned?

Wives made widows, virgins ravished,
Human blood like water lavished,
Every kindly feeling outraged;
Every evil passion engaged;
Our humanity denied,
Christ forsaken, God defied,
Demons worshipped, hell let loose,
This is war!! what can be worse!" — *Bowring*.

Mr. President, Ladies, Gentlemen, Members of the American Peace Society,—These and other questions respecting the terrible custom of war, need still to be pressed with all the earnestness of true philanthropy; yes, with shame be it said, in this latter half of the nineteenth century, need to be pressed upon the so called Christian nations not less than upon others! Not less do I say? nay more than upon others! The nations called Christian are the most powerful upon earth. They profess the religion which alone prohibits war. With them therefore rests the responsibility for the continuance of this most savage custom. Never, until they have abandoned it, will other nations be persuaded that it can be laid aside.

And with what propriety, with what justice to the name and spirit of Jesus, can a nation call itself Christian, so long as it rejects or

refuses to obey the peculiar, the distinctive principles of the Great Teacher? When we have pleaded for the abolition of slavery, we have been often rebuffed by the confident assertion, not wholly unwarranted, that neither our Saviour nor his apostles explicitly prohibited that gigantic wrong. But no one will venture a like assertion respecting war. If any thing was spoken of as sinful by Christ and the first preachers of his Gospel,—if any thing was forbidden by them—it was the indulgence of those lusts and passions which impel men to fight, and which are called into fiercest exercise in war. Need I quote any of their well known words to this effect? Here are a few of them. "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God. Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Avenge not yourselves. See that none render evil for evil to any man. Lay aside all malice. Have peace one with another. If thine enemy hunger feed him. Overcome evil with good." Thus, in language the most unqualified and comprehensive, is prohibited the whole spirit of war—anger, revenge, retaliation, violence. That Jesus Christ meant to teach, and introduce among men, a new method of treating the injurious and inimical—a new method by which to overthrow the empire of wrong, and establish the kingdom of righteousness on earth—is evident from his own conduct. He did not organize his followers for the protection of his person, or the maintenance of his cause. In the day of his utmost peril, he made no appeal to the common people, who had heard him gladly, and were at times eager to make him their king. He took no advantage of the hatred of their Roman conquerors, which was hardly suppressed in the bosom of the Jewish nation, but was ready at any moment for revolt. At no time did he show any confidence in "the arm of flesh." He came to inculcate far higher principles than had been taught by the vulgar heroes, who had overthrown tyrants before his advent—or by those who, since then, have followed their example rather than his. If the life, the preaching, the death of Christ has taught us any thing, it is, *that no cause however righteous, that no life however valuable, may wisely, safely, effectually be maintained or defended by violence, by bloodshed, by doing any harm to the erring, injurious party.* It is love only that can conquer hate. Good only can overcome evil. Right alone can suppress and supplant the wrong. Only so far as this great lesson is learnt and practised is there, can there be, any true Christianity on earth. The apostles of our Lord so understood it. They inculcated the same pacific principles; and manifested the same pacific spirit. Their disciples, and those who were instructed by them—the members of the primitive church—were sons

and daughters of peace. It is true the early Christians often resisted unto blood, "but it was the resistance of unyielding faith, and the blood of the unconquered martyr." Those who were baptized into the spirit of the new religion, the Gospel of Christ, would die rather than violate its distinctive principle. They would not become soldiers. They would submit to scourging, imprisonment, death rather than fight. After Christianity had spread over almost the whole Roman Empire, which then embraced the greater part of the known world, Tertullian says, of a larger part of the armies, that "not a Christian could be found amongst them."

And was not this to be expected from what is almost universally believed to have been the song of the angelic choir at the birth of Jesus—"Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace; good will amongst men?" Was it not too in accordance with what the teachers and professors of Christianity, at the present day, with rare exceptions, revere as "the sure word of the Hebrew prophecy," that the long promised one would inaugurate a reign of Peace, a kingdom of righteousness and love upon earth? the fulfilment of the glowing predictions of the ancient seer, which closed with the assurance, that "swords should be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks, and the nations learn war no more?" With these prophecies, which we hold sacred not less than the Jews, can we wonder that they refuse to accept our Christ—and point to the wars and warlike attitude of all Christian nations, as proof that the true Messiah cannot have come?

Of all the corruptions that since the third century have so deformed Christianity, that it can now hardly be identified with the religion taught by Jesus and his apostles, no one has so disfigured it, as the doctrine that men may avenge themselves; may and should return evil for evil; that it is praiseworthy, glorious to hate, destroy, exterminate our enemies. No infidelity is so disastrous as that, which has led men to doubt the power of love, the crowning attribute of God. No denial of Christ is so complete as that, which refuses to accept the peculiar, the distinctive precepts that he gave. It would be as consistent with his religion to lie, to steal, to blaspheme, to worship idols, as it is to fight.

Will any one answer me that men are so made, that they must and will fight; that there is a law of their nature, a law inscribed upon the very constitution of man prior to any revelation that has been given to him, which impels him to fight? that there is really no other way for us to preserve our natural, political or religious rights? To say this, is to say that God is the author of this direst evil, this "most fruitful

parent of all crimes," this most dreadful scourge of the human race,—the mother of slavery and human degradation. If our Creator has indeed made us so, that war is necessary, or expedient, the suffering may be ours, but the discredit, the shame reverts back to him.

Oh no, cry the apologists for war, frightened at the thought of charging God with such folly and wickedness, oh no—we mean that war is one of the bitter fruits of the apostacy; not in accordance with the original intention of the heavenly Father, but brought upon our fallen race by the transgression of our first parents. Well, then, if this be so, I demand, why do those who have risen with Christ, who are redeemed by him from the curse of the Fall, why do they give any countenance to this work of the Devil? Why do not they renounce war as peremptorily, as promptly as they renounce adultery, blasphemy, idolatry? Why do not they regard war, always speak of it, always treat it as a work of the Great Enemy of our race; and hold those who prosecute it as the children of the Evil One, unregenerate, reprobate, enemies of God as well as man? If war be indeed one of the evils brought upon the world by the wiles of Satan, the Power of Darkness, how can men and women, who have been brought into the "marvellous light of the sun of righteousness—the love of Christ," how can they treat with any honor the men, who have distinguished themselves in this service of the Father of lies, and of all mischief? How soon will the purpose for which the Beloved Son of God lived and died be accomplished, if those who claim before the world to have been regenerated by his spirit, to have experienced the power of his grace, continue still to do the very things, indulge the passions, perpetuate the wrongs, which he so emphatically prohibited? What progress can the Gospel make in the world, if those who acknowledge Christ to be their Master, continue to disobey his most peculiar commandments, and give themselves up to the guidance of his especial antagonist and enemy—baptizing with their prayers, celebrating with their Te Deums the cruel deeds, from which his most loving heart would recoil with horror—yes, bearing his cross, the emblem of the great self-sacrifice, before them as they go, maddened with revenge and hate to slaughter thousands, for whose spiritual redemption, as well as for theirs, he died—aye, filling the churches dedicated to his religion with costliest monuments, (as you may see all over Europe and throughout Great Britain,) in admiring commemoration of those, who have distinguished themselves on the field of battle. What evidence then have we, can we have, of the progress of Christianity on earth, so long as we see those nations, that profess to have embraced it, keeping themselves always prepared for

war; expending immense sums of money in the manufacture of deadly weapons; the erection of frowning fortresses on land, and ships of war to traverse the seas; compelling most of their male subjects or citizens to do military service; training them from early manhood in the arts of human destruction; and crowning with peculiar honors those, who distinguished themselves in the conflicts or artifices of war? What evidence is there that such nations are Christianized—that they have any true faith in Jesus—any correct knowledge of his Gospel, any just respect for his authority? Why ought we not as soon to acknowledge the Christian claims of daring, unprincipled speculators, reckless gamblers, if they only cry Lord, Lord, and *profess* a zeal for Christ? Nay, with what face can we stand aghast at the worship of Juggernaut, so long as we countenance the worship of this more savage and bloody idol? And how can we presume to send our missionaries to convert the Heathen to our religion, so long as we allow that it gives its sanction to a custom, which "makes man a demon, and turns earth into hell."

You would remind me, perhaps, that the moralists of no Christian nations sanction offensive, aggressive wars—that it is only for the sake of self protection they would have their several nations keep themselves armed; and only *defensive* wars, that any of them would justify. Ah! this is one of the chief delusions, which have cheated the so called Christian world of the truth as it is in Jesus, on this paramount subject. So long as nations keep prepared for war, and the people are trained and disciplined for it, so long will they be in perpetual danger of getting involved in it. The injuries or offences, that they may receive, will be exaggerated. The dogs of war are always impatient for a fight—and those, who hold them in leash, are too easily persuaded to let them slip. No—this pretence of the Christian statesmen, and moralists, that they mean to sanction only defensive war, is too transparent not to be easily seen through. Napoleon the First, solemnly averred that he had never waged any but a defensive war—*i.e.* a war that was necessary to enable him to maintain his assumptions and accomplish his purposes. And Archdeacon Paley, who until lately, has been the favorite teacher of morality in Great Britain, so defined ustifiable wars, as well nigh to cover from condemnation all those of the French Emperor.

Strictly speaking a defensive war is hardly practicable. It matters not how nearly a national conflict may have been, or may have seemed to be in the commencement, strictly defensive; it must soon become offensive, aggressive,—"be carried into Africa," as was said of old,—

or it will be unavailing. The measure of vengeance must exceed by any amount the measure of injury sustained; and so take the wrong upon its own side, or it will only enhance to itself the evil it was invoked to avert, or repel; and the defensive party will be overwhelmed in their own discomfiture, and accumulated loss and shame.

No, such statesmen and moralists cannot be sincere. If the so-called Christian nations were, in good faith, determined to sanction only defensive war, they might and would obviously and easily combine to protect each other forever from the recurrence of this direst of national calamities. All the nations combined might require of each nation to disband their forces, excepting such only as should be found necessary for the maintenance of internal order—a mere armed police. The nations united as a whole in the policy of peace, might forbid any one of the confederacy to make war upon another for any cause whatever—the whole standing ready and pledged to repress at once by their united forces the belligerent act of the offending member, and, if you please, visit it with such punishment as should be thought just and proper, in such cases. This course, though not in harmony with the principles of the Gospel, which this Society is endeavoring to disseminate, would be consistent with the doctrine of the right of self defence. It would be the wisest and most merciful application of that doctrine to national practice; and it would undoubtedly be adopted, if the nations were sincere in their professed intention to justify only wars of defence. The fact that they do not unite in prohibiting war, and compelling each other to adjust any difficulties, that may arise between them, in accordance with the award of an impartial umpire, shows that the so called Christian nations have no faith in the Prince of Peace.

Indeed they press upon us sundry reasons for not "beating their swords into ploughshares, their spears into pruning hooks, and learning war no more." Some of these let us now consider and scrutinize.

Most, if not all, of the reasons alleged in justification of a resort to war, are based upon the assumption that the accumulation of property, the maintenance and aggrandizement of national organizations, and certainly the attainment and preservation of Liberty are the *chief* concerns of mankind. The intellectual culture, the moral discipline, the spiritual progress of individual men are regarded, by the advocates of war, as matters of minor consequence. The welfare of the human soul is not taken into account by them. So far from estimating the soul as Jesus did,—so far from believing with him, that if men, as individuals or communities, could get possession of all the wealth and power of the world, by the sacrifice of their integrity, their purity or benevolence,

they would impoverish themselves in the exchange; so far from believing this, the advocates of war insist, that the exclusive occupancy of some small part of the earth's surface; the protection of the commerce, of a nation; and certainly the attainment and preservation of political prominence (not to mention more trifling pretexts) are objects of sufficient moment to justify a nation's plunging into the commission of wholesale, indiscriminate slaughter, and the indulgence of the most diabolical passions; yes, warrant a nation in bringing untimely death upon thousands and moral ruin upon tens of thousands of its own subjects, to say nothing of the destruction of the bodies and souls of at least as large a number of their enemies.

Well was it said by Cowper, one of the few Christian poets, "War is a game, which, were their subjects wise, kings could not play at." If the people did but perceive and consider how little their highest interests, their true welfare as rational and moral beings, is cared for by the men, who play with their bodies the dread game of battle—who, for some purpose of national aggrandizement, or for some stake of party or personal ambition, dispose of them as if they were of no more worth than the pawns upon a chess-board, or the pins upon a bowling-alley; I say, if the people were wise, if they did perceive and consider this, they would no longer consent to be played with, wasted, used up, as if they were mere tools in the hands of others. They would not submit to be cheated out of their homes, their comfort, their property, much less of their morals and their lives by the phantom of an imaginary interest—an interest, which, if it may seem real to the few, who are instigators of the war, has no reality to the many, who are summoned to sacrifice for it all they possess in this world, and to darken their hope of an inheritance in another world. Why, for what adequate benefit, should thousands of men be required to leave their homes, and the peaceful trades or handicrafts, by which they earn bread for the loved ones, who make their homes the dearest spots upon earth? Why should they be rigged out like puppets; trained to move as those who work the machinery of an army may please; be exposed to a moral atmosphere, which, it is generally acknowledged few can breathe without contamination; and, when they have become prepared for the fell purpose of the despots, who manage them, be brought out into the light of day to kill or be killed by fellow men, whom they never saw, with whom they can have no cause of quarrel, and on whom, let the provocation be what it may, they are bound, if there is any truth in Christianity, not to avenge themselves! Can this ever be right?

If there be, as we profess to believe there is, a moral Governor of the world, whose power is almighty, whose wisdom and goodness are perfect, who has the hearts of all men in his hands,—if, I say there be a God in Heaven, who presides over the affairs of Earth, can it be ever necessary that men should thus butcher one another, by wholesale, in order to effect any of the purposes, which He approves? Oh no! oh no! To insist that war is necessary is to imply that there is no God.

And yet, we often hear men, who would recoil from the suspicion of being Atheists, stoutly urging that war is sometimes necessary, *in order to establish or maintain the rights, the sacred rights of man.* Ah! The rights of what men, I fain would know. Surely not of those, who are persuaded or forced to fight the battles, to sacrifice their limbs, health, morals, if not lives in the hellish conflict. No, "War oppresses the industrious poor to settle the disputes of the luxurious rich." It crushes, uses up, annihilates thousands of men of low estate, to resent the insults, gratify the pride, or extend the domain of the ambitious and haughty. Certainly there is great injustice and cruelty in extending the privileges, or even securing the rights of one portion of the human family, by the destruction of the virtue, the comfort, the rights, it may be the lives, of another and a much larger portion.

I seriously ask, I press the question home, is men's liberty so essentially abridged, are their highest dearest rights so utterly set at naught by any of their enemies, as by those, who compel or persuade them to become *soldiers?* Surely there is no system of oppression so stern as the discipline of an army. There is no subjection so entire, so abject, except it be that of field slaves upon a cotton or sugar plantation. Look at it for a moment. The bodies of soldiers are clothed just as their masters please, and are fed by measure from their masters' cribs. They must stand up at the word of command, and may not lie down without permission. They must move or halt and keep their persons just in that position, which others see fit to order. Worse than all this, their minds as well as their bodies are put entirely at the disposal of officers. They are not allowed to judge of the propriety of any action they are required to perform; nor to choose to do otherwise than they are commanded to do. Whether willingly or not, they are trained to the work of murder; and driven to slaughter others by the fear of disgrace, if not an ignominious death. They are compelled to repress, if not to quench the spirit of humanity in their bosoms. "Men, who have nice notions about religion," said Lord Wellington, "have no business to be soldiers;" "The worse the man, the better the soldier," — said

Bonaparte: "If we do not find soldiers corrupt, we must make them so." Entire subserviency—prompt, unquestioning, unscrupulous obedience, are the highest virtues in the camp; and, on the field of battle, utter self-abandonment in the fury of conflict; skill and success in butchering human beings is the glory of the soldier. The Zouaves were the idols of the French populace last year. Those men, who were notorious for their vices and crimes, some of whom were reputed to be very demons in character, were almost worshipped by the people because of their desperate valor.

The morals of the military system are, if possible, more corrupt and corrupting than the morals of the slave system. He, who commands the army, is the one to whom the highest deference must be paid. He is to be obeyed rather than God. His edicts none may disregard with impunity. It matters not how grossly those edicts may violate the humane feelings of the soldier, or his sense of right, they must be implicitly obeyed. Thus are the rights of conscience ruthlessly trampled under foot. Insubordination to the will of the military chieftain is the highest crime a soldier can commit. He may more safely disobey all the commandments of the Decalogue, than refuse submission to his superior. The Church of Rome never set herself up above God so explicitly, as does the military department of every human government.

When it was urged, that General Taylor, and General Scott, who were signalizing themselves in the butchery of the poor Mexicans, had avowed their disapprobation of that war, deeming it unnecessary, waged without sufficient cause, for a most unworthy purpose; when it was suggested, that they were therefore especially guilty before God for taking any part in it, as they were at liberty to resign their commisions, it was promptly replied on all hands, oh no! 'It would be dishonorable in them to resign. They are soldiers, and must of course do whatsoever the government requires at their hands, let their own private opinions be what they may be.'

Could the authority of the Most High be more completely set aside? A soldier is required to merge himself, body and soul, in the plans and purposes of his human masters. He must go forward without hesitation, to do anything he may be commanded to do, not stopping to inquire whether it be right or wrong. Nay worse, with his eyes open, clearly seeing the thing commanded to be wrong, he must nevertheless do it. Such is the doctrine upon which the military system rests; such the doctrince that is accepted throughout Christendom. How wicked, how impious then, is it for any man to become a soldier. He ought to refuse to submit to the degradation, as did the primitive

Christians. He ought to refuse, though it should cost him his life. Better to die at the stake a martyr to principle, than to be a soldier. The etymology of the word shows how much of self-abandonment it implies. The soldier is a *sold* man. He is one, who has parted with himself for a price, to do the bidding of another; parted with his right of private judgment, his will, his conscience. We all have shuddered over the fictitious tales of men, who have sold themselves to the Devil Why should we shudder less at these actual sales, for the most diabolical purposes.

If now I have given a true description of the military system, what. cold hearted mockery it is to propose by such means, to obtain or preserve the rights of man, or the blessings of liberty. The condition of soldiers is the condition of slaves. Indeed Dr. Franklin said "the slavery of the soldier is worse even than that of the negro." How then can it be any more just or right to reduce a portion of the subjects or citizens of a country to the slavery of a military life, in order to enrich or aggrandize another portion, than it is to reduce some men to domestic servitude for the pecuniary benefit of others? When last year, in Europe, I met thousands of my fellow men hurrying to the battle fields of Magenta and Solfarino, clad in the livery of their respective armies, I said to them in my heart, 'poor fellows! you are going as victims to be crushed, mentally and morally, if not physically, beneath the car of an Idol worse than Juggernaut. You are going to be immersed, perhaps drowned in the slough—the physical disease and moral filth of the camp, or in the bloody vortex of the battle-field. If you are slain, no note will be taken of your fall, excepting to add so many more units to the number of the lost. We shall hear less of you individually, than of the wounded horse of your commander, or of the button that perchance may be shot off from his coat.' No, a common soldier, though a sensitive, affectional, rational, immortal being, is lost sight of in an army. He is but a fraction of that living mass, that is to be wielded by the despotic will of a fallible man; and that man is to be crowned as the victor in a conflict, where the triumph was really won by the valor or persistence of individuals, whose names may never be known. Oh! there is nothing that offends, that shocks me, so much, as this annihilation of the many for the aggrandizement of the few. The newspapers told of General Taylor's beating Santa Anna, and of Napoleon's conquest of the Austrian Emperor, and of the slaughter of their armies. as if the soldiers they had used up, in their games of Beauna Vista and Solferino, were of no more account than the marbles, that are won and lost by our boys in the streets.

How is it that statesmen and politicians have so long had the effrontery to pretend—and the people have so often been beguiled into the belief, that the cause of liberty was to be advanced, and the dearest rights of man secured, by the operation of the war system, which puts into the hands of a few the most absolute power over the bodies and souls of thousands; utterly annihilates the independence of individual man; and trains all who are brought under its influence, in the habits of implicit obedience, on the one hand, and, on the other, of the most reckless violation of the common rights and feelings of humanity?

Tell me not, that Slavery unfits men for liberty, and at the same time ask me to believe, that they, who have been trained up under the discipline of the army or navy, are fitted to appreciate the prerogatives and discharge the duties of freemen. "War generates more profligates than it destroys." "War renders men callous to the feelings and principles of humanity." I submit, therefore, what will a country gain, that goes to war even for liberty, though she may break the yoke, which a foreign tyrant had imposed,—what will she gain, if by so doing she must train up tens of thousands of her own citizens to return into her bosom, and poison the fountains of social virtue and domestic and public peace?

Nothing, in our country, hinders the general reception of the truth on this subject so much as the success, and assumed benefits of our Revolutionary War. My hearers, the true history of that conflict has not yet been written. Few, I suspect, have duly contemplated it, in the light of the Sun of Righteousness. The man who, of all that I know, seems to me to have looked at it from a Christian point of sight more intensely, to have searched into it, with the eye of a disciple of Jesus, more diligently than any other—the late Rev. Sylvester Judd—passed away before he had reported all that he discovered of the unchristian traits, and disastrous effects of that war. But let me put it to youselves; do you suppose the thousands, who lost their lives, or the lives of their fathers, husbands, sons in that war; the thousands more, who were doomed by it to drag out the remnant of their days in decrepitude, sickness, poverty, and the tens of thousands, who sacrificed their innocence and purity of heart, who were corrupted, depraved, who became profane, licentious; do you suppose, if all those thousands could testify, that they would pronounce our Revolutionary War a blessing? I tell you nay. To the vast majority of that generation, which fought the battles, endured the hardships, incurred the losses, moral and pecuniary, incident to that conflict, we cannot doubt that it was a calamity, which they never ceased to deplore.

It remains yet to be proved, whether that war has been, or is to be, on the whole, a blessing to after generations. It is true, the people of our country may have accumulated wealth much faster than they might have done, if the Revolution had not taken place. But the amount of our riches is no index to our true welfare.

> "Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> When wealth accumulates and men decay."

And has not the manhood of our countrymen fearfully decayed? So it appears. Are the noble sentiments of the patriots of '76, is their generous spirit, their respect for the rights of man, their love of impartial liberty, still prevalent throughout the land? Everybody must say no! The light that was radiated upon this nation at its birth, seems to be obscured. The men of our day (too many of them) seem to be more earnest for their parties, and even for their pence, than for their principles. And the glorious, gospel Declaration, with which our Fathers heralded their conflict for independence, has been impiously pronounced by some, and is practically regarded by most of our countrymen now, as "a mere rhetorical flourish." This would not have been the result, if the revolutionists had contended for their rights in a Christian way.

I know we are accustomed to boast mightily, that our Fathers first unfurled that standard, upon whose folds are inscribed the "natural equal, inalienable rights of man." And yet (oh! mountains fall and hide the shame) there is not another nation upon earth, that is outraging these rights so egregriously as we are. Well may *four millions, five hundred thousands* of the inhabitants of our land rue the day, which delivered this country from the dominion of the British Crown; for, had it not been for that event, they would probably be now rejoicing in the boon of freedom, with the emancipated in the British West Indies. If it be our Nation's glory, that she first unfurled the banner of universal liberty, it surely is her shame, that that banner has been snatched from her hand and borne outward, whither we as a nation are afraid to follow; for while monarchical England has set her bondmen free, we Republicans, Democrats, are insisting before the world, that it would be unsafe to give liberty to men, who are enslaved. Sentiments in favor of the freedom of all men, claims that were urged on behalf of the colored population — freely uttered, and kindly considered in Virginia, Maryland and other Southern States, at the time of the Revolution, and for twenty years afterwards, are now spurned, hunted, persecuted to the gallows and the stake, nay, struck down in the very Senate Chamber of the nation. Such outrages would not

have disgraced our country, if our Fathers had contended, and taught their children to contend for their rights, by Christian means.

If it be an eternal principle in the intellectual and moral world, as well as the physical, that *like begets like*, then we may not reasonably hope to promote peace, good order, respect for the domestic or civil rights of man, by the violence, uproar and cruelty of war. Just as reasonable would it be for the sober part of the community to set about drinking up all the intoxicating liquor in the land in order to protect themselves from the harm, which the intemperate may do; just as reasonable to inject into our own veins the virus of a raging pestilence, in order to check its progress, as it is to cherish in the bosom of our community the spirit of violence, of war, in order to repress the enmity and prevent the aggressions of other communities, or of individuals in our midst. It is only by steadfastly adhering, as individuals and a community, to the humane, benevolent, long-suffering principles of the Gospel, that we can help to persuade mankind to adopt them.

To insist that men are such beings, that they must and will fight, is to insist that they are brute animals — dogs, bears, tigers — and not rational and moral beings. To maintain that the human race is so constituted that wars are inevitable, are necessary, is to charge upon the Creator the inability, or the indisposition to save his earthly children, from the "most awful and comprehensive form of wickedness."

Notwithstanding the impiety of the imputation, the advocates of this wholesale ruin of bodies and souls, tell us that war is sometimes necessary, to prevent or repel an aggression upon what is called the territory of one's country. Ah! ah! by whose authority was the surface of God's earth divided and subdivided, and its several portions appropriated by this nation or that? Who drew the lines and demarcations, over which any of the children of men may not freely pass and repass, to gather as they can the fruits of *honest* enterprise and industry? Who decreed, that rivers or mountains, or even oceans, should make enemies of fellow men? Surely this was not the gracious intention of the heavenly Father. It directly contravenes one especial purpose of the mission of his Beloved Son. Christ is the Prince of Peace. He would bring all nations into harmony. He taught that the true interests of humanity are everywhere the same. His Gospel will not have accomplished "that whereunto it was sent," until all kindreds, tribes, nations of men flow together in a common brotherhood. It is the especial mission of those individuals and nations that have received the Gospel, to promote this union. Whoever, whatever, would

prevent this union, should be accounted unchristian, anti-christian, inhuman.

Political rulers are they, who keep the people aliens to each other. It is the policy of kings and statesmen to uphold those national distinctions, in which they find their own personal aggrandizement. To perpetuate those divisions it is, that armies are maintained, and wars often waged; and the people, not being wise, allow their kings and rulers to play with them the horrid games of war. Yet, not to mention the thousands who are slain, what shall it profit the mass of those who may escape the conflict, although a territorial boundary may, by the issue of a battle, be fixed for a season in one place rather than another? Of what avail, to the people of either country would have been a sanguinary conflict with England respecting Oregon, for which some of our statesmen and demagogues were so eager, a few years ago? Would it have changed the location of the territory? Would it have improved the character of its climate, or the quality of its soil? Would it have increased the capacity of its rivers and water-courses to bear the burdens of produce or importation, that the future inhabitants may need to commit to them; or to carry the machineries, that may hereafter be constructed on their banks? Not at all. Not at all. What great interest of humanity, then, could have rendered it necessary or advisable that the people of two nations should have been embroiled in a war; thousands of them have been slain; thousands more have been maimed or enfeebled for life; tens of thousands have been depraved in their habits and principles, and hundreds of millions of dollars squandered, in order to determine whether the disputed territory should thereafter be accounted a part of the British Empire, or of the North American Republic? Surely that was a question the common people did not raise, and never would have raised. It was started by the statesmen or demagogues, or land speculators of either nation, for the sake of personal, partizan or national aggrandizement. And great cause had the people to rejoice, that they abandoned their foolish and wicked project.

After all that has been said of the folly and wickedness of resorting to war in any case, I have no doubt that the belief still lingers in many minds, that war has been necessary, and may be necessary again, as a means of self preservation, national as well as personal. But all history teaches that War is the great destroyer, rather than preserver of human life. There can be no doubt that the resort to violent measures, by nations and individuals, has been the cause of the death of thousands for every life it has been the means of preserving. Several distin-

guished men have made computations of the human beings, who have perished directly and indirectly, by War. Dr. Dick estimates the number at 14,000,000,000. The famous Edmund Burke placed the number much higher, even as high as 35,000,000,000. But take the former calculation, the smaller number; and then let any one reckon up all the *unresisting* men, women and children that have been killed; all that have been murdered by robbers and pirates; all that have perished passively by the hands of political or religious persecutors; and double and quadruple, aye, increase the number a hundred fold, and he shall find the whole to be but an insignificant fraction of the above-mentioned victims of war. History reiterates what Christ predicted—"all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword."

If, in this connection, my hearers, you will consider what have been, on the whole, the results of war, you will be satisfied, I think, that it is an expedient, to which an enlightened spirit of self-preservation would never lead communities or single men.

Were it right in the sight of the Almighty Father, the sovereign disposer of all events, for men to resort to violent physical means to repel aggressions; to prevent a repetition of injuries, or even to obtain or preserve their liberties, we may fairly presume that He has ordinarily given victory to the injured, suffering party. But it has not been so. After all they may have said about the justice of their cause, in any case, or the necessity of the measure, war has ever been regarded by its most strenuous advocates as *a game of chance;* and with the greatest reason.

In 1820, a number of competent gentlemen, members of this Society, diligently examined the histories of all the wars, of which there are any sufficient records, since the days of Constantine. They inform us that during the period named, there were two hundred and eighty-six distinct wars. Of them, one hundred and twenty resulted in the success of the aggressive party; the same number resulted in favor of the defensive party; and that forty-six were indecisive, having terminated without advantage to either side.

A few years ago, the world was witness of a signal event, which went as far as one example could go, to prove that war is not the means appointed, or approved of God, for the redress of grievances however intolerable. I allude to the downfall of Poland. Did ever a people have a juster cause for war? Did ever a people fight more valiantly? How intently did the nations of the earth behold her struggles! How deep was the sympathy of millions in her cause! How ardent the hopes, how fervent the prayers, which went up for her deliverance!

But she fell before her ruthless enemies. She fell probably to rise no more. A heavier yoke was fastened on her neck.

I deeply sympathized in the general feeling. While the issue of the contest was pending, I cordially united in the wish—the prayer—that Poland might be victorious, for I knew that she had been oppressed. But when that Providence, without whose knowledge not a sparrow falls, permitted her to be brought under a severer bondage, I presumed not to doubt the wisdom of the dispensation. Indeed, it seemed to me strikingly adapted, and therefore perhaps graciously designed, to teach the nations a lesson of inestimable importance; to dispel that delusion under which so many of our race have been hurried into the field of battle, trusting that the Almighty would assist them *there* to maintain the right. Oh! that the calamity of Poland would impress this truth upon the hearts of all suffering men, *that war is not the best, is not the right way to throw off oppression, or to avert an injury.* Then would the heart of Humanity rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of the hope of that blessed day, when righteousness and peace shall prevail throughout the earth.

Another event transpired in our own country last year, which gave us a most impressive illustration of the truth, that physical might is not always with the right; that success does not always crown the efforts of the injured party to obtain their rights, or redress their wrongs by violent measures. I refer, of course, to the memorable affair at Harper's Ferry.

If fighting were the method appointed or approved of by the heavenly Father, there could be no conflict in which we should so confidently look for victory, as in one dared for the delivery of millions, who in our country are suffering the most abject slavery, that is to be seen any where upon the face of the earth. And it were easy enough for Him, who hath all power in his hand, to vindicate the cause of the weakest against the mightiest. This is the faith, we are told, the very sentiment, that roused and sustained the patriots of the Revolution, in their unequal contest with Great Britain.

Long contemplation of the wrongs and woes of the millions in our land, subjected to a bondage, one hour of which, as Mr. Jefferson said, is harder to endure than whole ages of that against which our fathers rebelled—long contemplation of the wrongs of the enslaved, at length roused to his daring attempt the hero and the martyr of Harper's Ferry. He knew that his cause was just. He meant to use no violence, if it could be avoided; to spare none, that should be found necessary. He was led to believe that the bondmen would rush to his standard, in

such numbers as would overawe their oppressors, and ensure them a bloodless deliverance from their grasp. He believed that, if compelled to *fight* in defence of his undertaking, men enough would come to his assistance, that would easily overbear all who might attempt to withstand him. Moreover, he felt solemnly assured, that, if there were any truth in the leading doctrine of our American Revolution, any reason in the resort of our Fathers to the trial by battle, he would be wholly justified in his attempt, even though it should involve our country in the horrors of another civil war.

I frankly declare, I am unable to see the incorrectness of the reasoning, or the immorality of the course of John Brown, if the doctrines and spirit inculcated by our Fathers of 1776, and the example set by them, were wise and Christian. The probability of their success was not much, if any, greater than his. The justice of their cause was far less.

Yet the hero of Harper's Ferry failed. He was taught in that hour that the God of the oppressed is not the God of battle; that the doctrine and spirit of Moses and David are not sanctioned by Christ and his apostles; that there is another and a better way of overcoming any evil than by killing or harming the evil doers.

Nothing daunted by his failure, with a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man, he humbly accepted the high lesson, which Providence gave him, and rose from the prostration of a fallen hero, to an almost unexampled sublimity as the *martyr of impartial liberty.* Words were spoken by John Brown at the tribunal where he was condemned to death, words were written by him from his prison house, that can never be forgotton. A spirit went forth from his bosom on the gallows, that has quickened the heart of humanity in the cause of our enslaved countrymen, as it was never moved before. His death is working, and will work in their behalf, a far mightier, happier, holier result, than would have been accomplished, if he had slain hundreds of slaveholders, and given deliverance to thousands of their bondmen. *The martyrs, not the fighters, have been and will be the seed of the Church, the saviours of mankind.*

Fellow laborers in the cause of Peace, the Providence of God has given men no encouragement to resort to weapons of violence and death, even in defence of their dearest rights. Whenever a people resort to such weapons, they commit their cause to *the chance of battle.* Suffer not yourselves, nor others, to be beguiled of the truth on this momentous subject, by the occasional result of a war, not even by that of our Revolution, the issue of which is not yet fully known. If success in

war is evidence of the Divine approval, then must we conclude that the conquerors of Poland were in the right; that all the wars of Bonaparte but the last were justifiable; that Charles XII. of Sweden, and Frederick the Great, and Gengis Khan and Tamerlane, and Alaric and Attila, and all the *successful* warriors that have scourged mankind, were approved and assisted by God. But from this decision, I trust, all would recoil.

The great lesson, which Christ teaches and History confirms, is, that it is unwise, as well as unchristian, for men or nations to resort to weapons of violence, in order to redress their wrongs, or to vindicate their most precious rights. There is never any certainty, that the injured party will be successful in such a conflict. The Almighty promises his grace to the meek, not to the valiant; his support to those who confide in the power of his Holy Spirit, which is continually working in the hearts of men to will and to do of his good pleasure; and not to those who trust to brute force or stratagem.

To invoke the benignant Father of all men, as the patron of battle, seems to me as impious as it would be to call upon him to preside over any other scene of reckless indulgence of human passions,—to preside over a desperate game of chance, a duel, or that disgusting pugilistic contest, at which the eyes of millions in England and our country have been gloating for the last three months, with an eagerness of interest, that would be shocking even in savages. And I cannot see why it would not be just as consistent for a Christian minister to play the priest at the combat of Heenan and Sayers, as to be the chaplain of an army.

The religion of the Gospel utterly prohibits revenge, wrath, violence, without which there can be no war. The Providence of God has given no approval of bloodshed and murder. Indeed it has signally justified the declaration of Jesus, that the use of the sword only leads to the multiplied destruction of life.

The folly of the custom of war is exceeded only by its wickedness. It is the height of foolishness, it is madness, to commit the protection of our dearest rights and interests to the chance of battle. There is never any certainty that the injured party will be successful in war. Physical might is, by no means, always with the right. *But moral might is always with the right.* Why is it that so few men have yet received this great truth, which Providence has been teaching from the beginning of man's probation, and which is so plainly declared in the Gospel of Christ? *Moral might is always with the right!* When men really believe this, they are invincible. William Penn believed this,

and dare l to plant his colony in the midst of savages, without a single weapon of defence. There they lived, as long as our Republic has been in existence, maintaining the good order of civil government without a standing army, a militia, or even an armed police; there they lived in peace and unexampled prosperity, so long as this faith and a pacific spirit prevailed in the councils of the Colony; there they lived unharmed in the midst of warlike Indians, for more than seventy years, while the Colonies of New England, and other parts of the continent were embroiled in wars, suffering and *committing* atrocities of cruelty, the narration of which would make our blood curdle with horror.

The Quakers in Ireland believed in the might of the right. They believed that "when a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." They believed in the power of Love to restrain the violence of men, to turn their hearts from evil intentions, and to convert enemies into friends. During the whole of the terrible civil war, which raged in that Island in 1798 and 1799, those followers of the Prince of Peace were in continual danger; their properties and their lives were frequently threatened by one of the contending parties, and then by the other; sometimes they were in imminent peril. Nevertheless, they were steadfast in their adherence to their principles. They would not arm themselves, nor put their confidence in armed men. They would take no part, directly or indirectly, in that ferocious strife. They persisted in treating members of each party with kindness, and faithfully rebuking both of them for their folly and sin. They were sustained; and fully justified the wisdom and power of the pacific course, which they had pursued. At the end of the war, it was ascertained and made public, that only two, out of the twenty thousand Quakers, who lived in that part of Ireland where the conflict raged, only two had been slain; and they had lost their faith, and betaken themselves to a fortified place for protection. The rest had come out of that fiery trial unscathed. Even their dwellings and fields had been spared. In the midst of the desolation, which the fury of the combattants had spread far and wide, there were to be seen *uninjured* the houses and the properties of "The Friends."

Did time permit, a few more examples might be given of the safety of those who "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God." The only reason why Christendom is not filled with the fruits of the spirit of Christ is, that Christians, so called, have not put on Christ, they have not the same mind that was in him; have not his faith, his hope, his charity.

Mr. President, Members of the Peace Society, the reform for which

under your auspices, I thus plead, is as broad as Humanity; and rests upon principles as deep as the foundations of the moral government of God.

Whenever or wherever *men* are to be dealt with, whether as individuals or communities, let us confidently rely upon the principles of the *nature* which the Creator has given them, and trust to the influence of his own ever-present, holy, loving spirit upon their hearts. Faith in Humanity, and faith in the Providence of that benignant Father who has the hearts of all men in His hands, will give us that moral power by which all evil doers may be overcome, the violent restrained, and the kingdom of Peace and Righteousness be established upon earth.

THE TESTIMONIES OF ILLUSTRIOUS MEN AGAINST WAR.

General Washington wrote thus, "It is time for mad heroism to be at an end."

Dr. Franklin said, soon after the close of the American Revolution — "There never was a good war, or a bad peace." — "All wars are relies, very expensive and very mischievous."

President Jefferson wrote thus: "War is entirely inefficient towards redressing wrong." — "War multiplies instead of indemnifying losses."

Lord Brougham said, "I hold war the greatest of human crimes."

M. Necker said, "War suspends every idea of justice and humanity."

Dr. Channing said, "The true principle for a nation is to suffer wrong, rather than to do it."

LONDON PEACE SOCIETY.

EXTRACTS FROM ITS LAST ANNUAL REPORT.

Not to be discouraged by unfavorable circumstances.—"That the passing appearances of the times are unfavorable, cannot be denied. A vague and ominous misgiving, begotten by past wars and by present preparations for war, is diffused throughout Europe. Public feeling in our own country has become morbid in its excess of suspicion and alarm, and the fashion of the moment has served to throw a meretricious glare around military ideas and pursuits, by which the minds of multitudes have been dazzled. If, therefore, their cause rested upon the ebbing and flowing tide of circumstance and opinion, they might at such a crisis yield to discouragement and despondency. But founded, as they believe it to be, upon principles that are fixed and imperishable, they feel that they ought not to be much moved from their steadfastness by those fleeting shadows of chance and change. Unless all the lessons of philosophy and experience are to be ignored, the true progress of humanity and civilization must be in the direction in which they are laboring. Unless all the teachings of Christianity are to be set aside as cunningly-devised fables, the great truths upon which their movement rests, bear upon them the stamp of divine authentication. Unless the hopes inspired by scripture prophecy are to be renounced as delusion, the work in which they are engaged is one in harmony with the ultimate designs of Providence, the triumph of which cannot be of doubtful accomplishment. They trnst, therefore, they may without irreverence describe their own feelings in the language employed by those engaged of old in a still higher and more arduous enterprise: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair."

Special need now of efforts in this cause.—"Never was there a time when the existence and exertions of a Peace Society were more imperatively needed than they are at present, to bear a testimony for a portion of God's truth and of man's highest interest, which is greviously neglected, and in danger of being utterly swamped in the rising deluge of enthusiasm for military display and brute force. It is impossible for any thoughtful observer to doubt, that, ever since the Russian war, public sentiment in England has been suffering a grievous moral deterioration, if the Christian standard of morality is the highest to which a nation's heart can be conformed. For, instead of the spirit of benignity and brotherhood which Christianity commends, the national mind has been pervaded by a hard, coarse, material sentiment, which finds vent in a mingled strain of terror and defiance, which is not pleasant for any one who respects the dignity of his own country, to hear; puts its sole trust in the muster and display of physical force; and laughs to scorn all faith in the influence of intelligence, of commerce, of civilization, of Christianity, or indeed of any principle save that of mutual fear, as of the smallest account in regulating the conduct of states towards each other.——Of late this spirit has taken new and strange developments among us, in the revived popularity of coarse and disgusting exhibitions, which we had hoped had passed away for ever before the advancing light of intelligence and religion. We have no right, however, to be astonished at it. It is a perfectly natural result of the rampant war-spirit that has been abroad for the last few years, and abroad by the sanction and encouragement of many who were thought to be the special guardians of a Christian civilization among us. And it may, perhaps, serve to awaken salutary reflection in the minds of some of our religious teachers in pulpit and press, who have been stimulating the war-spirit, and glorifying "muscular Christianity," as to whereunto this thing may grow, when they see the worship of brute force which they have helped

to promote, culminating in triumphal ovations given to the champions of the prize-ring, such as are rarely accorded either to genius, or virtue, or piety; while these brutal displays themselves, though in flagrant and acknowledged violation of law, are made the subjects of formal and elaborate eulogy by Ministers of State in the British Parliament, on grounds and for reasons which would equally justify admiration for pirates and highwaymen; nay, for the very lowest order of brute beasts, who often display in still higher perfection the same qualities for which these pugilistic heroes have won for themselves such distinguished patronage and panegyric.

This, then, is not the time in which the Friends of Peace should desist from their labors. Nor have they any such intention. Long experience has enabled them pretty accurately to count the cost of the course they are pursuing, and are still determined to pursue. By some they will be pitied as impracticable dreamers; by others they will be denounced as disloyal subjects; by many their objects will be misunderstood, and their motives misconstrued; but in these respects they will fare no otherwise than all have done who have dared to be faithful to unrecognised or unpopular truth. There is in every age a large class of minds, to whom all the aspirations and efforts of humanity to attain a higher development, appear only as fitting objects for scepticism and scorn. No great moral reform which has gladdened the hopes of the world, but has had for years to run the gauntlet of these men's derisive laughter. They laughed at Clarkson and Wilberforce, when they lifted up a banner in the name of the Lord against the infinite iniquities of the slave-trade. They laughed at Buxton and Sturge when, taking up the work which their illustrious predecessors had commenced, they demanded the total abolition of slavery throughout the British dominions. They laughed at Romilly and Macintosh, when they strove to purge our statute-book of that sanguinary criminal code which was a dishonor to our country and to our age. They laughed at Carey and Marshman, when they conceived the sublime enterprise of converting India to God. They laughed at Cobden and Bright, when they struggled to unfetter our commerce, and to obtain untaxed bread for the people of England. And no doubt the same class will assail with the same weapons all our efforts to substitute right for might in the intercourse of nations, and to abolish the unutterable wickedness and folly of war. But we trust that not for all this, and much more than this, will the humblest member of the Peace Society forsake his post, or desert his banners. For, if we may borrow our imagery from the camp of our opponents, peace hath her conflicts no less severe, and her victories far more renowned, than those of war. But they are conflicts undertaken for no selfish purpose, and waged with no carnal weapons. They are victories followed by no wail of agony, blotted with no stain of blood. Still the struggle must no doubt be long and strenuous, and to each who engages in this holy war, may be addressed the language of the poet, written on a battle field, contrasting the moral with the material warfare. Pointing to those sleeping below, he says: —

"Soon rested those who fought; but thou
Who minglest in the harder strife
For truths which men receive not now,
Thy warfare only ends with life.

Yet, nerve thy spirit to the proof,
And blench not at thy chosen lot;
The timid good may stand aloof,
The sage may frown — yet faint thou not.

Nor heed the shaft too surely cast,
The foul and hissing bolt of scorn;
For with thy side shall dwell, at last,
The victory of endurance born."

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